

Social Justice and Its Relation to Urban Planning

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Abstract- Most of the Egyptians - in the wake of the 25th of January revolution- dealt with social justice as an economic concept that can be achieved only by setting fair maximum and minimum wage limits. Thus, this study aims to increase the awareness of the relationship between social justice and urban planning and how cities planning can cause injustice.

Keywords- Social justice, Urban planning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social justice is one of the most important moral, legal, political and social concepts that has been defined differently by different groups and changed from time to time depending upon the prevailing conditions of an era. It was first interpreted from philosophical point of view as the link between human soul and his role within the community, afterward developed with the teachings of the world's great religions to emphasize human value through ensuring individual liberties and rights, and then transformed to an economic concept to solve the problem of poverty. Later, it was developed to cover all aspects of life; including urban planning. This study aims to demonstrate the concept of social justice and how it is connected to urban planning.

II. SOCIAL JUSTICE

Often when people think of the study of justice they think immediately of a crime, the arrest of an offender by the police, the pleading of a lawyer at a court and the eventual detention of the offender in jail. However, laws and crime are parts of the study of justice, only parts. The concept of justice is even older than law [1]. Etymologically, justice originates from the Latin word "*Jus*" meaning "*right*" [2]. Therefore, justice -by derivation- seems to mean: "*Giving each their rights without depriving others of their rights or harming them*". It can be classified into divine justice and human justice. Divine justice is the justice given by Allah, while human justice is the justice given by humans. The problem with human justice is that it is human; human beings are sinful by nature and their standards are ever changing [3]. Thus, some shortcomings showed up and human justice becomes defective. So it can be said that divine justice is infallible, while human justice is fallible.

According to Maguire, there are three forms of human justice because persons relate in three different ways: we relate on a one-to-one basis (commutative justice); the individual relates to the social whole (social justice); and the representatives of the social whole relate to individuals (distributive justice) [4]. Thus, commutative justice concerns obligations arising from

relationships between and among individuals, groups, and classes. Such relationships involve respect for the rights of the other person; like treating one another with respect and dignity. As for social justice (also called contributive justice), it is concerned with what an individual owes to community. It concerns with obligations of a citizen to a government or of a person to a community. Part of this obligation is fulfilled through participation in the civic life of a community, including paying taxes and voting. Distributive Justice concerns obligations of a community or government to the individual members of the community or citizens of the polity, particularly as regards the allocation of public social goods. In other words, distributive justice is concerned with what a community owes to an individual.

Although social and distributive justice are conceptually distinct, they complement one another. Taxes can be used to show this complementarity. A citizen owes the duty to pay taxes to the government (this is a matter of social justice). The duty to determine tax liability based on a criterion of fairness, like the ability to pay, is a duty which the government owes its citizens (and this is a matter of distributive justice). Therefore, many researchers assumed that distributive justice and social justice are synonymous expressions. One of the most famous of these researchers is Rawls who defines social justice as: [5]

"a characteristic set of principles for assigning basic rights and duties and determining the proper distribution of benefits and burdens in society".

Thus, the term social justice became used to determine what mutual obligations (rights and duties) flowing between the individual and society [6]. These obligations began as a philosophical concept linking between human soul and his role within the community, developed to be a religious concept generated from the teachings of the world's great religions, replaced to be a political concept separating the government institutions from the religious ones, and ended as an economic concept to solve the problem of poverty.

A. Earliest ideas of social justice

The idea of "Social Justice" dates back to Plato and has been practiced and refined by a long and illustrious list of activists through the centuries. In the discussion of justice in the city in his book "*The Republic*", Plato has classified justice into two types, individual and social.

He remarks that it is common to see a connection between justice and performing one's function. He claims that an

individual will perform his own function if the parts of his soul perform their own functions [7]. According to Plato, the individual's soul is divided into three parts; each has a necessary role to play. If those parts are in balance, the soul will be just. Thus, justice is a natural balance of the soul's parts. This is what Plato calls "individual justice" [8]. In order to explain this, Plato presents the story of Leontius, the son of Aglian. One day Leontius walked by an execution and saw dead bodies on the ground. When he saw them, part of him wanted to turn his head in horror, and part of him wanted to look at them. Eventually, his inner appetite to look has won, and he looked at the bodies. He became very annoyed and screamed at the executioner. Plato explains that the annoyance sometimes makes war against the appetites. Sometimes, when these inner wars take place, we do not act reasonably. The result was Leontius screaming at the executioner. Thus, the screaming was a result of his thinking about the dead bodies, having an appetite to look at them, and finally looking at them and reacting in the way he did. Accordingly, Plato divided the individual's soul into:

- The rational part (mind or intellect): the thinking portion within each of us, which decides what is true and what is false, determines what is real and what is not and makes the rational judgments based on what will be better for himself and others. In Leontius' soul, this is the part that was thinking about the dead bodies, and realizing that the sight was very annoying. He tried to make the rational judgment not to look at dead bodies, however, the second part of the soul prevented him from doing so.
- The appetitive part (emotion or desire): the portion of each of us that feels and wants many things. This is the part of his soul that wanted to look at the bodies, and finally overcame his rational part. As a result, he lost his self-control because of his anger.
- The spirited part (will or volition): the portion that takes action. Its task is to do whatever the mind has determined to be best. In this case, since Leontius realized that the dead bodies were annoying site, he finally looked at them, he got very angry and reacted in a way that he thought was best: displaying his hatred and screaming at the executioner.

It is worth mentioning that different men enjoy these three parts in different proportions; what distinguishes one man from another is, precisely, the proportions in which these parts are mixed in his soul. For example: a brave man is the individual whose "spirited soul" keeps intact the instructions given to it by reason about what is to be feared, what is not to be feared and what is worth fighting for; to fight for the wrong cause is bravery but not genuine courage. As for a virtuous or just person, the three parts of the soul exist in harmony; each fulfilling its role excellently: the rational element, supported by the spirit, controls the appetites. Plato believes that only through this balance can justice be achieved for the individual.

Therefore, individual justice can be defined as: "*a state of inner harmony, with physical appetites, emotions and reason working together in perfect unity and order, each having its due proportion of influence*".

Similarly, Plato argues that the city is just when each individual does his own work by sticking the task assigned to him by the city [7]. He finds that there are three main social functions: ruling the city, defending the city, and provisioning the city. Thus, he divides the city into three social classes: Rulers, Soldiers and Workers. Moreover, Plato links social justice to the predominance of some one part out of the three pointed above in the individual justice and to virtues as follows [8]:

- The rulers organize the soldiers to defend the city for the benefit of all, and the workers to produce and distribute goods and services. They are predominantly rational; the virtue of ruling class is wisdom.
- Soldiers don't hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the state and rulers. They have a spirited soul; the virtue of them is courage and honour.
- The workers class is assigned a labor duty so that they provide food and other basic necessities to the people of the society. They are neither strong in spirit nor in reason but only in passions; the virtue of workers is moderation because it controls the greed that is the besetting sin of business and that destabilizes the economy.

According to Plato, justice is said to be the performance by each class of its job and non-interference in the jobs of the other classes. This is what Plato calls "social justice". He also argues that, only such harmonious individuals can create a harmonious society and a harmonious state. Social justice cannot be achieved without individual justice. In fact, the social justice is based upon the individual justice. In other words, only in a society where individual justice is generally found, social justice can be achieved [8]. Therefore, social justice can be defined as: a state of harmony between social classes corresponding to the three parts of the soul.

It is notable that the Platonic theory of social justice divides the state into three separate classes, which is not applicable to modern states with large population and numerous interests and sections of society. His division of society into separate classes would lead to a class state with class privileges.

B. Religious concepts of social justice

Universal concepts of social justice developed with the teachings of the world's great religions. For example, Islam appeared in the seventh century within a society characterized by deep social differences with a domination of wealthy merchants and a harsh slavery system. Therefore, social justice is considered as one of the most important principles upon which Islam is built on and the Prophet Muhammad and his companions practiced precisely in order

to found a strong and coherent society. Social justice in Islam is achieved through several elements such as [9]:

- *Individual freedom:*

Allah gave Adam liberty of free choice between right and wrong. It is in the same reference that Allah almighty says in the Holy Qur'an:

“Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him”

Holy Qur'an (91:8)

This verse reflects that freedom is an equally shared goal of all mankind, wherewith none violates freedom of other individuals. Freedom in Islam is freedom of speech, expression, thought and religion.

- *The poor tax (Zakat):*

Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is expected to be paid by all practicing Muslims who have the financial means (nisab). Islam set Zakat in order to avoid destitution, to meet needy persons' basic needs, build a responsibility between the rich and the poor, and shape a healthy society through mutual relationships. It is built on the principle of Islam decrees that persons earn their own living as long as they can. However, since everyone in the world is not created the same in terms of intelligence, character and physical ability, all of which affect the chance of earning a good living, it is understandable that some people will be at a disadvantage compared to others. Zakat provides a guarantee for those who are without resources. It helps those who may have exhausted their powers and received no return, or those who received barely enough to meet their needs. It provides for those who cannot earn a living because of personal disability or handicap (physical or mental), or for those for whom there is no employment.

- *The endowment (Waqf):*

Waqf is one of the oldest charitable institutions in the world. It aims at achieving social justice through a person ("waqif") making his property a charitable endowment for the ongoing benefit of a certain class of persons (i.e. orphans, handicapped) or the public at large; this pooling of resources allows the growth of contribution and the leveling of social differences between Muslims.

Accordingly, it can be said that this concept of social justice goes beyond justice according to social status and recognizes universal human value; individuals receive what they need on the basis of their humanity (not what they deserve on the basis of their social class origin).

C. *Political views of social justice*

As a result of the tolerant teachings and principles established by the world's great religions, clerics' reputation was

solidified and their stature increased among people. In west, from very early ages, this was the main reason for the domination of the Roman Catholic Church over all aspects of westerners' lives. The church became very involved in economic and political affairs, including starting wars; the most important is The Thirty Years' War, and fighting for money and other interests. Moreover, the church opposed scientific discoveries to guarantee its domination and control over the people; otherwise, the church might lack its power and respect as a pioneering center of religious guidance. For instance, the church disapproved Giordano Bruno's theory about earth revolving around the sun, a theory now proved to be true; while the Scripture –according to their allegation– claimed that the earth is the center, not the sun. Wherefore, Bruno was burned at the stake in Rome in 1600; the second one who came to confirm such information, Galileo was imprisoned, threatened by torture to deny his beliefs because his words were not in accord with Christian superstitions.

As the wealth and the power of the Catholic Church grew, instances of financial corruption, abuse of power increased; to the extent that it persecuted the Protestant church and killed those who did not agree with its views. Consequently, west viewed the Catholic Church domination on aspects of life and prevented any new discoveries that might not serve their domination and interests as a curse required to get rid of it. They started to find a refuge from church control by calling for secularization [10]; the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions and religious dignitaries, in order to protect the religious minorities and socially deprived sections from communalism and persecution.

Secularism's view to social justice was not much different from the universal concepts of social justice developed with the teachings of the world's great religions, regarding to human rights and liberties, as both appeared within societies characterized by subjugation, discrimination and exploitation for the minorities. According to Rousseau, social justice in the 17th and 18th centuries was linked to the preservation of individual liberty or freedom (including: freedom of speech, religion, political views and expression), achievement of equality of rights (especially, the right to equal treatment under the law and due process, the right to a fair trial, and the right to life and the right to defend oneself), and establishment of common bonds of all humanity. So, it can be concluded that this concept of social justice emphasized human value through ensuring individual liberties and rights.

D. *Distributive views of social justice*

Social justice as a political concept continued until the Industrial Revolution. During the Industrial Revolution, people from the countryside migrated to cities and factory towns looking for a better life. They wanted to make more money to support their families. They believed that they had an opportunity to try something new and take part in an era of

progress. Unfortunately, disappointment soon followed when workers realized that their new life wasn't at all what they expected. Factory workers lived with minimal standards of living. A one family crowded into a cheap one-room house that was connected back-to-back with neighboring houses. Their neighborhoods were dirty; as:

- Most people threw their household wastes into the streets or courtyards.
- Forty houses shared six toilets.
- Fresh water was hard to come by.

People were constantly getting sick, they didn't live long under those conditions. In 1841, the average life expectancy in England's rural areas was 46 years. In London, it dropped to 38 years, and in Liverpool, people were lucky to live to 27 years of age. Nevertheless, workers' productivity made an unprecedented surplus of goods. This increase in productivity led to a decline in the value of goods. Products become less and less valuable, causing income to decrease while the work load increases.

Authors and philosophers gave their attention to determining how these goods should be distributed in society [11]. Hence, the idea of distributive justice originated in the late eighteenth century, inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas about citizen equality, Immanuel Kant's emphasis on the equal moral worth of all human beings and Adam Smith's focus on 'the harm done to the poor's private lives. The theory of distributive justice stated that it is just for those who enjoyed a surplus of goods to distribute that surplus to those in need. Subsequently, it was based upon the principle of proportionality; it is improper for a single individual to command an amount of goods that is disproportionate to his own needs. It can be said that need determined the proportion to be received at that time. It is worth mentioning that this principle attained a wide fame and expanded to include the distribution of common goods (i.e. food, housing and income), resources (i.e. land, water, minerals, fuel and wealth) and opportunities (i.e. access to benefits) of a society to all its members.

Later, more criterion in distributing goods emerged; including people's contribution within the society, their merits, ranks and ability to pay. Recently, those criterion were used by many urban planners in order to distribute cities benefits justly.

III. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND URBAN PLANNING

Urban planning can be defined as the branch of architecture that deals with the organization of the city or other urban environments in terms of its physical, social, legal, economical, visual and environmental elements. However, if an architect is asked to design a building for a client, he is not asked to judge whether the client deserves the building or who needs that location the most. So, why is urban planning concerned with social justice?. There are several reasons why

urban planning should be concerned with social justice [12]:

1. Urban Planning is an action of government that necessarily affects the distribution of goods, services, and more generally life opportunities among individuals and groups, and justice is a necessary criterion for such distribution.
2. Planners' actions focus on the distribution of space, and thus the distribution of its benefits and costs among individuals and groups, and justice concerns the proper criterion for such distribution.
3. Planners necessarily analyze the causes and effects of their work on existing condition over time, and thus must deal with the causes of unjust distribution.

This drew the attention of some researchers to study how cities planning can cause injustice. The most famous are Peter Marcuse.

A. Henri Lefebvre

In 1968, Henri Lefebvre introduced his book "*Le droit à la ville*" based on his investigation of urbanization in France in the wake of the Industrial Revolution until the 1960s [13]. Like most of the Western industrialized nations, France –at that time– was marked by expansion of production. This expansion was accompanied by enormous migration from rural to urban areas, which led to a lot of changes in these areas spatial structures. In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte made himself emperor of France. He was hoping to make Paris the most beautiful city in the world. It was during his reign that the Arc de Triomphe and many other monuments were built. In 1852, Bonaparte's nephew, Napoleon III, hired Baron Haussmann to complete Bonaparte's goal. Baron Haussmann quickly transformed Paris in the years following his hiring. Large areas of medieval Paris were demolished to make way for improved infrastructure, wide avenues and new buildings. The city's water supply was enhanced, the sewer systems were upgraded, railroads and stations were constructed. The creation of wide streets helped to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and accommodate multimodal traffic with separate amenities for walking, horseback riding, and carriages. Also, clearing out medieval building stock allowed for land to be opened up for high-rise residential buildings and new building typologies like department stores.

However, these improvements were not without their losses and hardships. The new high-rise buildings displaced a lot of poor residents who could not afford to live in these new buildings, or if they did, it was in the small attic spaces, which were often up as many as seven flights of stairs. The city was replaced by a new urban phenomenon characterized by the bursting of the city into peripheries and suburbs to accommodate those under-classes; hence, the margins were dominated by mass production of social housing. According to Lefebvre, being marginalized geographically within the city compounded the contours of social injustice by denying

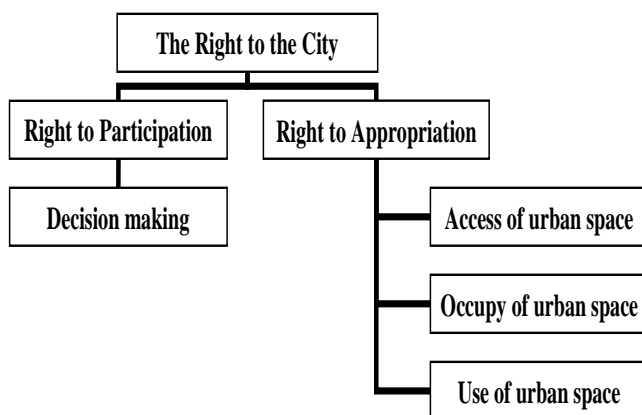
certain groups from access to the city, and thus depriving them of participation within urban life on an equal footing to the more privileged

Therefore, Lefebvre proposes a programme of urban reform whereby urban inhabitants would reappropriate the urban space and claim their 'Right to the City'. According to Lefebvre, the Right to the City [14]:

“should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space [..]; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos”

Lefebvre's Right to the City encompasses two different rights: the right to participation and the right to appropriation. The right to participation contends that inhabitants should play a central role in any decision that contributes to the production of urban space, which is usually conducted by power, capital or other institutions. This concept involves those who are usually excluded from decision-making procedures such as homeless people and slum dwellers. As for the right to appropriation, it includes the right to dwell, physically access, occupy, and use urban space within the city for everybody without being excluded. According to Lefebvre, because appropriation gives inhabitants the right to 'full and complete usage' of urban space in the course of everyday life, space should be produced in a way that makes that full and complete usage possible. Therefore, the use value aspect of urban space must be the primary consideration in decisions that produce urban space.

Fig. 1: The Right to the City



B. David Harvey

In 1973, David Harvey in his book “*Social Justice and the City*” argues that planners are essential in social justice, because planning involves distributional decisions with allocational effects on the real income of urban dwellers.

According to Harvey, the redistribution of income can be brought about by changes in: the location of economic and/or residential activities, the value of properties and the availability and price of resources to the consumer.

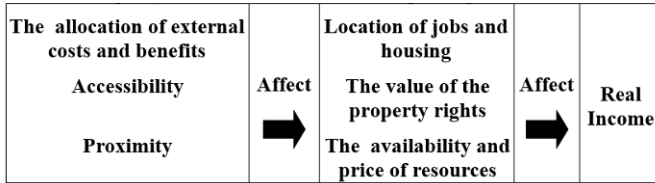
Harvey noted that, the changing location of economic activity in a city means a changing location of job opportunities. The changing location of residential activity means a changing location of housing opportunities. One or both of these changes affect the cost of obtaining access to job opportunities from housing location and thus change expenditures on transport. For example, the lack responsive of low-income housing to the demand of the poor traps them in the inner city, the location of jobs in the suburbs may force low-income urbanites to spend of their limited income more than they should theoretically be able to withstand to transport to the suburbs, which in turn leads to worsen their mobility [15].

Harvey also found that, the value of properties –which are embedded in the spatial form of the city like land parcels and the buildings thereon– can change differentially in a city markedly over fairly short periods of time. These changes are often thought of as the result of demographic movements, changes in local facilities, swings in fashion, changing investment policies, the values of neighboring properties and so on. Therefore, the actions of individuals and organizations other than the owner can affect properties value. It is worth mentioning that these external effects on the value of properties are not under the property holder's control nor are they adequately catered for the pricing system operating in market. Hence, lack of control over properties value can redistribute income.

Finally, Harvey pointed out that, the real income of an individual can be changed by changing the resources available to him. This change can be brought about in a number of ways: the quantity of a free unpriced resource (i.e. a fresh air and quiet) may be altered, the price of a resource may be changed, or the cost of access to a resource may be changed.

According to Harvey, these changes are themselves affected by: the allocation of external costs and benefits; the by-products of other people's activities (i.e. waste discharge into water and into the air) to different regions in the urban system, the changes in accessibility; measured by the cost overcoming distance and of using time, and proximity; being close to something people do not make any direct use of (a household may find itself proximate to a source of pollution, noise or to a run-down environment. This proximity tends to impose certain costs upon the household: i.e. cleaning and laundry bills, soundproofing, etc.). Accordingly, it can be concluded that, changing spatial form of the system of the city causes major changes in distribution of income.

Fig. 2: The relation between urban planning and income



From previous studies, it can be concluded that there are two forms of injustice regarding the physical environment; including:

- The isolation of any group for any reason to a limited space.
- The no-thoughtful allocation of resources; which can be resulted from the inaccurate decision-making procedures.

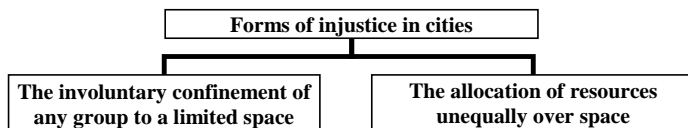
It is worth mentioning that, this conclusion agrees with what Peter Marcuse inferred in his paper “*Spatial Justice: Derivative but Causal of Social Injustice*”.

C. Peter Marcuse

Marcuse argues that one of the major forms of social injustice in cities is the involuntary confinement of any group to a limited space. In this context, he differentiated between a ghetto and an enclave. According to Marcuse, a group that wishes to live together voluntarily is not ghettoized, not segregated, not being treated unjustly when it is allowed to cluster. It may cause injustice, if it restricts the opportunities of others, as gated communities do, but not every clustering is a mark of injustice [16].

Marcuse found also that the allocation of resources unequally over space (i.e. limited access to jobs, political power, social status, income and wealth) is another form of social injustice in cities. He explained that justice here does not mean absolute equality, but rather inequality not based on need or other rational distinction. According to him, one possible definition of a rational distinction is one agreed up by open, informed, democratic processes, one based on legitimate authority rather than relations of power. Hence, Marcuse concluded that social injustices always have a spatial aspect.

Fig. 3: Forms of injustice in cities



IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous studies, social justice regarding urban planning is related to:

- Society’s duty in ensuring the fair allocation of different urban goods and spaces within the city, and the access of different types of individuals to them.
- Individuals’ duty in utilizing and maintain these urban spaces, and their contribution in different planning decisions and actions.

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